

To: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
Airspace Advisory Committee

Date: December 18, 2001

File: AIRSPACE
Airspace Advisory
Committee

From: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF MASS TRANSPORTATION, M. S. 39

Subject: Lease of Airspace #03-SAC-051-0005 to Sacramento Regional Transit District for
Mass Transit Facility

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memo is to request the Airspace Advisory Committee (AAC) to review the attached Sacramento Regional Transit (RT) District's application and make a recommendation on this lease to the California Transportation Commission (CTC).

The AAC, at your meeting on January 9, 2001, approved a resolution to implement procedures for leasing airspace to public entities at less than fair market rent. An amendment to CTC Resolution G-6 provided that all leases and other written agreements with public entities for mass transit facilities for less than fair market rent, will require CTC approval. On February 22, 2001, the CTC approved this resolution. (G-01-12).

The CTC staff has asked the California Department of Transportation (Department) to implement the program as a pilot program and to collect comments and recommendations from the local agencies to improve the program. This is the first application under this pilot program.

Highlights of the application include the following:

1. **Lease Caltrans Airspace site #03-SAC-051-0005 for \$1 per year for 99 years, with no subleases.**

RT must have a bus-parking site close to its maintenance facility. The further the buses are from this facility, the more inefficient and costly it is to maintain them. If 31 buses travel one additional mile per day to a remote lot, it will cost RT an additional \$8,400 annually.

RT must have a bus-parking site close to its administration facility. If each of the 180 bus operators must walk just five more minutes out of the way to a remote lot to do a bus check out, personnel costs for 31 buses will cost RT an additional \$19,000 annually.

To cover higher operating costs or fair market rent for this airspace, RT has no choice but to take funds away from its operating budget. These expenses take away from funds available to provide bus and rail service to customers.

2. **Site is needed to relieve traffic congestion.**

Caltrans Airspace site #03-SAC-051-0005 is needed, because it will provide more parking for an expanded bus fleet, which is part of an expanded service plan to relieve traffic congestion and improve mobility on the State Highway System.

According to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), the regional transportation planning agency, transit improvements, such as an expanded service plan, may help to relieve traffic congestion and improve mobility along congested corridors, such as Business 80, Interstate 80, Highway 50, Highway 99 and Interstate 5. These corridors during the AM peak (7 a.m. to 10 a.m.) and PM peak (3 p.m. to 6 p.m.) currently reach congested levels. As the Sacramento region grows, highway corridors are expected to reach gridlock.

3. **Other benefits of the project**

Accommodating the expanded bus fleet through this project will enable RT to increase service by 30%, which means an increase in ridership estimated at 21,000 daily customers or 5.7 million customers annually. RT customers can expect expanded service and routes, higher frequency of trips, reduced travel times, increased access

and convenience. Bus service will also increase to support the expanded light rail system to further assist more customers with travel needs.

According to SACOG, increased transit service improves the quality of life for low-income populations. Typically, low-income populations rely on public transit for the majority of their transportation needs if they do not own an automobile. The majority of employment growth has been in the suburbs of Sacramento. Increased transit service will enable this population to access these employment centers for entry-level and service jobs.

With the addition of 98 new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses and CNG shuttles, RT's fleet will be 100% CNG and enable RT to retire the last diesel buses in the fleet. According to federal standards, Sacramento is considered a "severe non-attainment area," for ozone. The most cost effective means to control ozone is to control nitrogen oxides. One way to accomplish that is to utilize buses that run on CNG. Hence, RT can play a significant role in improving the quality of air in the region.

4. One-third of the site will be employee parking.

Thirty percent of the airspace will be allocated for employee parking. It will be open for Department monitoring and adjusted annually based on needs. Parking must be devoted to 180 bus operators and 20 mechanics/supervisors whose work shifts begin before RT starts daily transit service. These employees cannot take public transit, because they start public transit. Parking will be free to employees.

5. Other airspace sites and properties considered and rejected.

Other RT properties do not provide employee parking and off-site parking in the area is very limited. RT's existing airspace from Capital Avenue to P Street between 29th and 30th Street will continue to be used for buses and support vehicles. It has reached its parking capacity and cannot be used as a site.

RT owns and maintains 10 park and ride lots for the light-rail system. However, these lots cannot be used as they are too far from the Bus Maintenance Facility, are at parking capacity and need to be reserved for commuters who use the light rail system.

RT will continue to properly manage all airspace leases. RT's Facility Maintenance Department will assume responsibility to reconfigure the new site for bus and other vehicle parking, including pavement installation, striping, fencing improvements, and lighting improvements.

6. District Airspace Review Committee (DARC) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)'s reviews

The DARC and FHWA are expected to review and approve the use of this airspace, as it is consistent with current and neighboring uses for parking and will not affect highway safety or interfere with operations.

CURRENT SITUATION:

RT will make a presentation to the Airspace Advisory Committee (AAC) at the January 9, 2002 AAC meeting to explain to members the merits of this project. Per the transit agencies and regional transportation planning agencies, transit agencies want to be in a position to present its case to the AAC and the CTC. The Department will not be making an independent analysis of the application.

Original Signed By:

JAMES D. CONANT
Branch Chief
Program Development

Attachment
JCONANT/SMORI/airspaceltr/X/1a

Leasing to Public Entities
Streets & Highways Code 104.12(b)

Site No: _____ (FOR RIGHT OF WAY USE ONLY)

**Public Entity Application for Airspace Agreements for New Mass Transit Facilities for Traffic
Congestion Relief**

Section I: General Information

A. Public Entity: Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT)

Mailing Address: 1400 29th Street, Sacramento, CA 95812

CEO or Director: Pilka Robinson

Title: General Manager

Phone: 916.321.2989

FAX: 916.444.2156

Email: probinson@sacrt.com

B. Partnering Public Entity:

Mailing Address:

CEO or Director:

Title:

Phone:

FAX:

Email:

C. For Additional Information: Contact Person

Name: Rosalyn Zeigler

Title: Real Estate Administrator

Mailing Address: 2811 O Street, Sacramento, CA 95812

Phone: 916.557-4692

FAX: 916.321.3843

Email: rzeigler@sacrt.com

D. Caltrans District:

Name: Wayne Schnell

Title: Transit Representative

Mailing Address: 703 B Street, Sacramento, CA 95901

Phone: 916.741.4025

FAX: 916.323.7669

Email: Wayne.Schnell@dot.ca.gov

Public Entity Application--Continued

Section I: General Information

E. Total Estimated Cost of Project: \$195,000, parking lot improvement cost only
F. Project Start Date: December 2001
G. Construction Start Date: December 2001
H. Project End Date: Indefinitely
I. Proposed Duration of Lease Start Date: December 12, 2001 End Date: December 11, 2100
J. Describe the geographical area you serve. (Topography, square miles, communities to be served, describes other land developments that might complement or conflict with proposed project. Provide a map or diagram.) <input type="checkbox"/> Major urbanized area with a population over 200,000. In the past decade, Sacramento's population and economy grew dramatically. Population is up 18% and employment is up 23%. However, housing and employment centers are dispersed throughout the region. As a result, commuters now encounter city streets, bridges, and freeways choked with traffic, particularly during the peak commute periods. The amount of lost time and productivity is enormous, which has a tremendous negative impact on the region's economy and quality of life. Growth and changes in travel demand throughout the region have created inadequacies in the transportation system. Within the next 25 years, within RT's service area, the population is expected to grow 40% and employment by 45%. To remain competitive with other urban areas for economic development, housing and quality of life, Sacramento must have a comprehensive and expanding transit system serving its residents. This project utilizes airspace within the existing infrastructure of Business 80 and P and Q streets in Downtown Sacramento. Business 80 also has on and off ramps near the airspace site, so buses can access Business 80 and other State Highway Systems to start and end daily service runs. This project will serve the City of Sacramento, Citrus Heights, Elk Grove and the County of Sacramento. Currently, the total size of RT's service area is 418 square miles.

Public Entity Application—Continued

Section II: Project Information

A. Project Site and Use Information:

(Identify airspace within Caltrans right of way and describe the proposed mass transit facility use. Also indicate whether there will be any commercial vendors, subleases, or subcontractors and the nature of their business. Provide a map with proposed or existing service defined in urbanized area boundaries, if possible).

□ Other Mass Transit Facility: Airspace Bus Parking Storage Facility

This project is located within the airspace #03-SAC-051-0005 bounded by 29th, 30th, P and Q streets in Sacramento, California. This airspace facility is desirable because of its close proximity to Regional Transit's Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Bus Maintenance and Administration Facilities located just to the north of the project. RT proposes to lease the airspace in order to accommodate the parking needs for 98 new CNG full-size buses, which is scheduled for delivery in December, 2002. This facility would also create additional space for RT to park other types of buses, which include replica streetcars, neighborhood shuttle buses, and a variety of bus support vehicles, which include supervisors cars, police cars and maintenance trucks.

Approximately 30% of the airspace facility would be devoted to parking for approximately 180 bus operators and 20 mechanics/supervisors whose work shifts begin before RT starts daily transit service. This percentage for employee parking will be open for Caltrans monitoring and adjusted annually based on needs.

RT does not have any plans to allow commercial vendors, lessees or sub-lessees to use any portion of the airspace stated above.

Public Entity Application—Continued

Section II: Project Information

B. Project Gap Analysis:

Why is this particular project needed and why is this specific airspace needed to relieve congestion? What operational savings/benefits will result from obtaining this specific airspace over and above obtaining the specific airspace at less than fair market rent?

RT is the first applicant to this pilot program and would like to see this program made permanent. The operational savings and benefits gained from an airspace lease at less than fair market rate will enable RT to devote more resources to help relieve traffic congestion, improve mobility on the State Highway System, and improve the efficiency and connectivity of its transit services. Hence, RT proposes to lease Caltrans Airspace site #03-SAC-O51-0005 at \$1 per year for 99 years.

This project is an integral part of RT's service expansion plans because it is required to accommodate the expansion of the CNG bus fleet. Currently, RT operates a fleet of 224 buses. This fleet consists of 213 full size buses, four replica streetcars and seven neighborhood shuttle buses. The RT Board of Directors recently awarded a contract for an additional 98 buses, 67 of which will replace the last full size diesel buses. The remaining 31 buses will be used to expand service. RT currently leases the airspace in the three blocks immediately north of the project site for the purpose of parking the existing bus fleet, and support vehicles. This space is only sufficient to accommodate the current fleet of 224 buses. The 31 expansion buses requires RT to find additional parking space in order to accommodate them.

The key determinant in locating additional parking is its proximity to RT's Bus Maintenance Facility. These buses are fueled, cleaned and maintained from this facility on a daily basis. The further the buses are from this facility, the more inefficient and costly it is to maintain them. For example, RT estimates that it costs \$0.75 per mile to maintain its CNG powered full size bus fleet. If the entire group of 31 expansion buses were required to travel one additional mile per day related to remote parking, this would be approximately \$23 per day or \$8,400 annually.

In addition, the buses are dispatched from RT's Administration facility located at 1400 29th Street, which is in the block immediately south of the Bus Maintenance facility. Bus drivers check in at this facility and walk to their bus parked in a designated space in the parking lots. A full time bus driver at the top of the wage rate is paid \$.34 per minute. If remote parking requires five more minutes of check out time, these 31 buses would cost an additional \$53 per day or \$19,000 annually. In both examples, these increased costs come directly from Regional Transit's operating budget, and takes away from funds available to provide bus and rail service to customers.

Caltrans Airspace site #03-SAC-051-0005 is needed to relieve congestion, because it will provide more parking for an expanded CNG bus fleet, which is part of an service expansion plan to relieve congestion and improve mobility on the State Highway System. Further information on congestion relief is discussed on Section II.F.

Public Entity Application: Continued
Section II. Project Information

C. Describe other sites (including those you own, lease, control and have interest, and other governmental owned) that were considered and why were they rejected in favor of this proposed airspace site?

RT owns the property located at 2811, 2815 28th Street and 1400 29th Street, however, these properties do not provide parking for employees and off-site parking is very limited and has reached its capacity in the immediate vicinity. Caltrans Airspace site #806 is the most desirable site because of its close proximity to RT's facilities as previously described above.

RT has an existing airspace lease located from Capital Avenue to P Street between 29th and 30th Streets and is currently being used to store buses, support vehicles and limited employee parking. This lease has been in existence for nearly 30 years. This airspace site has reached parking capacity and therefore cannot be used as a site. RT plans to continue to use this airspace site for bus parking, support vehicles and limited employee parking.

RT owns and maintains 10 park and ride lots, which contain 4,153 spaces. These park-and-ride lots were rejected as sites, because they are not close enough to the CNG Bus Maintenance and Administration Facilities to be useful. These lots are also near parking capacity and need to be reserved for commuters who park there to use light rail.

If Caltrans Airspace site #03-SAC-051-0005 is not obtained and an alternative bus parking site further away from the RT CNG Maintenance and Operations Facility and RT Administration Facility needs to be secured, additional operational and personnel expenses will need to be incurred. Similarly, if the Caltrans Airspace site #03-SAC-051-0005 is not obtained at less than fair market rent, additional operational and personnel expenses will need to be incurred. As a result, fewer resources will be available to increase and expand transit service.

Public Entity Application—Continued

Section II: Project Information

D. Brief description of organizational capacity to carry out this project:

RT began operations on April 1, 1973, with the acquisition of Sacramento Transit Authority. Later that year, RT completed a new maintenance facility and purchased 103 buses. Over the next decade, RT continued to expand bus service to the growing Sacramento region while a cooperative effort emerged among city, county and state government officials to develop a light rail system. In 1987, the 18.3-mile light rail system opened, linking the northeastern (Interstate 80) and eastern (Highway 50) corridors with Downtown Sacramento.

RT operates 74 bus routes, using 224 buses and a light rail system utilizing 36 light rail vehicles. Annual ridership has steadily increased on both the bus and light rail systems from 14 million passengers in 1987 to more than 26 million passengers in FY 2000. RT owns and maintains 224 CNG, diesel-fueled, and gasoline-fueled buses. RT's full size bus fleet is among the highest percentage of alternatively fueled buses among public transit agencies in the country at 64% and will be 100% CNG by December 2002.

By the year 2003, RT's service expansion will require an increase of the bus fleet by 10%. By the year 2008, the size of RT's bus fleet will expand another 15% and the total system-wide ridership is projected to be over 34 million. These bus services expansions will enhance reliability to existing communities and provide new service to communities that have yet to be served.

RT will continue to properly manage all airspace leases. RT's Facility Maintenance Department will assume responsibility to reconfigure the site for bus and other vehicle parking, including pavement installation, striping, signage, fencing improvements, and lighting improvements.

Public Entity Application: Continued

Section II: Project Information

E. Project Scope:

Provide a description of the project's scope.

- 1) Increase operational demand to reduce traffic congestion and improves mobility
- 2) Enhance regional mobility and support regional planning policies
- 3) Increase overall transportation service in Sacramento County
- 4) Expand and accommodate a larger bus fleet in order to efficiently operate mass transit
- 5) Improve service island circulation and free up space
- 6) Improve and increase overall service expansion
- 7) Encourage more people to use mass transit

F. Describe the current transit system and how this new project will positively result in congestion relief. (Include a brief description of the current system and the new system changes. Describe the congestion levels and commute times of the existing corridor in which this project is proposed. Cite and provide any studies and/or surveys that support your claim or estimates.)

See above for description of current transit system.

According to the Sacramento Area Councils of Government, the regional transportation planning agency, transit improvements, such as RT's bus service expansions coupled with the expanded light rail system, may help to relieve traffic congestion and improve mobility along congestion corridors, such as Business 80, Interstate 80, Highway 50, Highway 99, and Interstate 5 corridors. Transit improvements may cause mode shifts from automobile to transit. This mode shift benefits transit customers and motorists.

The above highway corridors during the AM peak (7 a.m. to 10 a.m.) and PM peak (3 p.m. to 6 p.m.) currently reach congested levels where demand exceeds capacity and the system breaks down (stop and go traffic). As the region grows, highway corridors are expected to reach gridlock.

G. Public Entity Application--Continued

Section III: Project Benefits

A. Describe how the proposed project will provide additional transportation benefits to more transit riders. (E.g. expansion of service area or hours, increase frequency of trips, rider ship survey results, reduced travel time for riders, increased access and convenience to riders). Provide studies or surveys.

As a result of this bus service expansion plan and this proposed project, RT customers can anticipate expanded service and routes to existing communities and to communities not currently served. This service may include higher frequency of trips, reduced travel time, and increase access and convenience to customers. It is also RT's intent to increase its hours of operations for its bus service to synchronize its schedule with the light rail system to further provide improved customer service.

Furthermore, increased transit service particularly helps improve the quality of life for low-income populations. Typically, low-income populations rely on public transit for majority of their transportation needs if they do not have an automobile. In the Sacramento region, the majority of employment growth has been in the suburban areas. Access to this emerging employment center for entry-level jobs for this population will now be possible given increased public transit service.

As stated above, with the addition of 98 new CNG buses by December 2002, RT's fleet will be 100% CNG. According to federal standards, Sacramento is considered a "severe non-attainment area," for ozone. The most critical pollutant to control is oxides of nitrogen, a precursor to ozone. The most cost-effective means of controlling this pollutant is to convert heavy-duty vehicles, like buses, to run on CNG. RT also plans to operate the State Shuttle Service. These shuttles utilize clean burning compressed gas (CNG) and will improve the air quality in the Downtown area. Hence, RT fleet of 100% CNG buses and shuttles will play a significant role in improving the air quality of the Sacramento area.

In addition, this project will enable RT to institute Lifeline Service to allow for 24-hour bus service to accommodate the commute needs of the non-traditional workforce. This workforce consists of employees who work at hospitals, police departments, shopping malls, etc.

Public Entity Application---Continued

Section VII. Signatures of Applicant Agencies

Filka Robins

Dec 20, 2001

Chief Executive Officer or Director of
Public Entity

Date

(This person must be the CEO or Director of the public entity and have authority to sign agreements or contracts for the public entity.)

Chief Executive Officer or Director of
Partnering Public Entity (If Applicable)

Date

(This person must be the CEO or Director of the public entity and have authority to sign agreements or contracts for the public entity.)



















